

# Replacing Sprinkler Heads and Using the Correct Nozzles

One of the most common water waste problems I see when doing check-ups, is the incorrect nozzle on replaced sprinkler heads. When a head gets broken, most home owners go to Home Depot or Lowes and buy a replacement head with a nozzle already in place. The problem with this is that the nozzle that comes with the head may be a full circle, when a half circle nozzle will do the trick.

## **What's the big deal with correct nozzles?**

The difference between a nozzle that comes standard with a new store bought head, and a correct nozzle that is bought separately is two gallons a minute or more. A full circle 15' radius nozzle uses about four gallons per minute, a half circle uses only two gallon per minute, and a quarter circle nozzle uses only about one gallon per minute. You can imagine the savings when running a zone 15 minutes for two times a week. A simple change from a quarter circle nozzle would save 90 gallons of water on ONE head, per week.

## **Buying new sprinkler heads**

When you are buying sprinkler heads try to stay consistent with the heads that are already in place in your yard. This insures the same coverage. Also, never buy a sprinkler head with a nozzle in place. They sell heads without nozzles so that you can buy the correct nozzle for the coverage needed at the least amount of gallons per minute. This way you can get the most bang for your buck!

## **Special nozzles to be aware of**

Thin areas, like the area between the sidewalk and the street, can use a nozzle called a Side Strip throw nozzle, or S.S.T. These nozzles blow 15 feet side to side, but only go out to about four feet. They use about one gallon per minute, and prevent large amounts of water from running down the sidewalk and street. Installers often put in the incorrect nozzle on original installs, so even though you may not have a broken head, installing S.S.T. nozzles could save you money and save water.

## **Installing nozzles**

Changing nozzles require NO digging and consists of only changing the very top threaded part of a sprinkler head. Twist the shaft to the point the nozzle in the right direction, and NEVER loosen the nozzle to adjust directional coverage. All pop-up spray heads are designed to have a shaft that pops-up and can be twisted for directional coverage.